

Religion

The following essays comprise Section Two of *Everything Voluntary: From Politics to Parenting*, a book compiled by the editor, Skyler J. Collins.

The Origin of Religious Tolerance, by Wendy McElroy

“Commerce, or shop-keeping, established an arena within which people dealt with each other solely for economic benefit and, so, ignored extraneous factors such as the other party’s religious practices. On the floor of the London Stock Exchange, religious differences disappeared into background noise as people scrambled to make a profit from one another. The economic self-interest of the Christian and the Jew outweighed the prejudice that might otherwise sour personal relations between them.” Read the full thing »

The Historical Origins of Voluntarism, by James Luther Adams

“From the point of view of a theory of associations, the demand for the separation of church and state and the emergence of the voluntary church represent the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one. The earlier era had been dominated by the ideal of ‘Christendom,’ a unified structure of society in a church-state. In the new era, the voluntary church, the free church, no longer supported by taxation, was to be self-sustaining; and it was to manage its own affairs. In the earlier era, kinship, caste, and restricted community groups had determined most of the interests and the forms of participation. In the new era these interests became segregated. In this respect the freedom of choice was increased. The divorce of church and state and the advent of freedom of religious association illustrate this type of increase in freedom of choice.” Read the full thing »

For Conscience's Sake, by Carl Watner

"The voluntarist does not advocate separation of Church and State because the issue is a red herring. To argue for separation of Church and State does nothing more than to legitimize the State since it does not question or challenge the State's existence. The issue, by the nature of the way it is framed, assumes that the State must and should exist. The fact of the matter is that Church and State will never truly be separated until either one or the other disappears. Tax exemption of church property or taxation of church property? So long as a State engages in compulsory taxation to raise its revenue, it must inevitably impact on the religious sphere. Has the religionist, who must support the police with his taxes, had his rights violated when the police come to the aid of the atheist? If the State pays a policeman to direct traffic and protect children going to church schools, might not the atheist object to having his tax money spent in such a fashion? Only a voluntarist would recognize the injustice inherent in these situations. So long as the State violates property rights by its existence – which it must necessarily do – religious freedom or any other form of freedom will never be secure. In principle and in practice, all freedoms are interrelated to one other. If a property right may be violated in one sphere, by the same principle it may be violated in another." Read the full thing »

Secular Theocracy, by David J. Theroux

"Secular theocracy exalts a sovereign and powerful state that pervades all of life and compels obedience not just to its mandates but to the secular nationalism of the Zeitgeist itself, for which the populace is forced to conform to and fund. This worldview dominates public schools, colleges and universities, elite media, entertainment, and an ever-expanding array of government domains in law, health

care, welfare, retirement, transportation, commerce, parks and recreation, etc. Not coincidentally in the modern era when nation states have displaced God, Cavanaugh notes, 'it does not matter that the U.S. flag does not explicitly refer to a god. It is nevertheless a sacred – perhaps the most sacred – object in U.S. society and is thus an object of religious veneration.' And worship in the secular theocracy in schools and at public events consists of singing the 'National Anthem' and saluting the flag in 'The Pledge of Allegiance,' which as described by its socialist author Francis Bellamy, 'is the same with the catechism, or the Lord's Prayer.'” Read the full thing »*